

Why does chewing gum lose its flavour?

From the sweeties.net wiki

A piece of chewing gum is really two things. One part is designed to dissolve: the sugar or sweeteners, the flavourings, acids and softeners. The other part, the gum base, is designed never to dissolve. The flavour lives almost entirely in the first part, and as you chew, it leaves.

Your saliva is washing it away

Gum base is made of polymers that repel water, so saliva cannot touch it. But everything else in the gum does dissolve in saliva, and once it dissolves you swallow it. What you are left with is the gum base, which has no real taste of its own.

The timeline of a chew

Gum makers have studied this closely, and the release happens in stages:

1. **The first three to four minutes.** The bulk sweeteners, sugar in ordinary gum or sweeteners such as sorbitol and maltitol in sugar free gum, dissolve fastest. They carry most of the sweetness, so this is when gum tastes best.
2. **About four to six minutes.** Intense sweeteners and some acids dissolve and wash out. They last a little longer because they dissolve more slowly.
3. **Around 10 to 15 minutes, or later.** In some gums, flavours sealed inside tiny capsules are released. Because the capsules hold on to them, they come out later, sometimes not until 30 to 45 minutes in.
4. **The end.** Finally the softeners, such as corn syrup and glycerine, leach out, and the gum starts to feel firmer.

Why sweetness matters so much

Research shows that people taste gum's flavour better when there is sweetener present. So once the sweetener has gone, even a gum that still has some flavour left can seem to have lost it. That is why modern gums are designed so that sweetener and flavour are released together, in step, for as long as possible.

Can you get the flavour back?

Not really, because the flavour has been swallowed. Some people add a fresh piece to an old one, which works because the new piece brings its own sugar and flavour. Once the fun has gone, the best place for the old gum is in a tissue and in the bin. Never on the pavement: see [why gum is so hard to get off pavements](#).

Is there a benefit to chewing after the flavour goes?

For your teeth, possibly. Chewing sugar free gum after a meal gets saliva flowing, which helps wash the mouth. See [is chewing gum good for your teeth?](#)

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